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The VDI vs. Desktop-as-a-service debate, settled!

By Nathan Chai, ASSISTANT EDITOR

nathan@itproportal.com

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As businesses shift to cloud services as the norm, virtualisation has dramatically increased in popularity as it becomes a more viable option for those organisations that can't afford large data centres or servers. We thought it was time to settle the arguments once and for all so sat down with Jason Lackey, director of digital marketing for **Pluribus** to discuss virtualisation vs. desktop-as-a-service (DaaS), the most common misconception when it comes to virtualisation, and the future of

the virtualisation space

Where do you stand in the VDI (virtual desktop infrastructure) vs. DaaS argument? How should businesses make the decision between the two?

VDI vs DaaS is an interesting debate. The IT model is quickly changing and evolving, in some shops it has become little more than an order placing function that serves to buy the cloud services used or needed by the organisation. Shops like this will usually have as little as possible “on premises” and if they have anything in-house they are probably looking to move it to some sort of public cloud as soon as the opportunity presents itself. For shops like this, DaaS seems a natural choice.

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Of course the cloud is far from a uniform monolith and uses and users of the cloud are equally diverse. Many shops use the cloud, often hybrid or private, to get as much as possible out of their IT investment without having to ship everything “off-premises”. For those users, VDI seems a more natural choice. Indeed, in such shops it is likely that they are either already running OpenStack [software that allows you greater control over your cloud] or will be soon, a situation that dovetails nicely with running VDI on a private cloud.

How have cloud services impacted the virtualisation space and what are we likely to see happening in the virtualisation space in 2015?

While we expect to see cloud based virtualisation services gaining further traction in 2015, one of the biggest things we see happening with virtualisation are the changes to the network virtualisation landscape. Right now the VMware approach, while popular and widely adopted, has a number of drawbacks. One is cost, with 70-80 per cent of rack spend going to virtualisation and orchestration.

Additionally, the VMware approach offloads tunnel compute burdens to host CPUs, which puts a significant performance tax on every virtualised host in the network. Additionally, these overlay/underlay approaches in effect create another network to manage while complicating application level troubleshooting by creating an additional network which has no visibility into or knowledge of the physical network it runs on.

We anticipate vendors coming out with solutions supporting VXlan but offloading the tunnel overhead to the network, allowing the more specialised, efficient hardware in the network to cope with that overhead while removing that burden from hosts, providing in effect a significant performance boost to every host in the virtualised network.

We also anticipate seeing more virtualised applications running on server-switches similar to Facebook Wedge or other designs like network computing appliances. Running such applications directly on the network provides better performance and visibility, allowing for faster deployments, lower running costs and faster troubleshooting.

What is the biggest misconception about virtualisation that you always come across?

One of the biggest misconceptions we come across with regards to virtualisation is that it needs to consume 80 per cent of rack spend and put a performance tax on all the hosts on the virtualised network. It doesn’t need to be this way, there are better, more cost effective options.

What was the most innovative use of virtualisation technology that you saw in 2014?

One of the best examples that comes to mind is the way that we (Pluribus) handle L4-L7 services, which we can virtualise on the network, running the VM directly on the switch. When done in the context of a Pluribus cluster fabric, which allows the entire network to be managed as a single logical device, these virtualised applications for the first time gain visibility into and control over the network using standard server-style APIs like Java, C, Perl and Python.

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*A big thanks to Jason for sitting down with us, you can follow him on Twitter **@408jay**. Pluribus Networks are finalists in the Virtualisation category of the **Tech Trailblazers** award, if you liked what you've heard or the interview was useful for you please vote for them **here**.*

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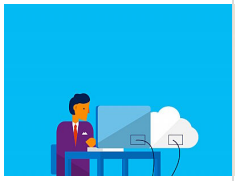

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